DARK HORSE COMICS
DRAGON AGE
3 OF 3

FROM THE LEAD WRITER OF THE DRAGON AGE GAMES

DRAGON AGE™

UNTIL WE SLEEP

DAVID GAIDER | ALEXANDER FREED | CHAD HARDIN

DRAGON AGE™

UNTIL WE SLEEP

Part 3 of 3

Three brave souls—King Alistair of Ferelden, the dwarven rogue and storyteller Varric Tethras, and the notorious pirate known as Isabela—have embarked upon a mission to rescue Alistair's father, King Maric, from the blood mage Aurelian Titus.

With the help of the imprisoned Maevaris Tilani—widow to Varric's cousin and sorcerous enemy to Titus—Varric found King Maric locked in a strange machine and attempted to destroy it. As a result, the group was trapped with Titus in the Fade—a dimension of dreams and pure magic.

Varric, Isabela, and Maevaris reunited in the alien otherworld, pursued by Titus's demons, and sought to track down Alistair. But Alistair—along with King Maric himself—has succumbed to the fantasies and temptations presented by the Fade . . .

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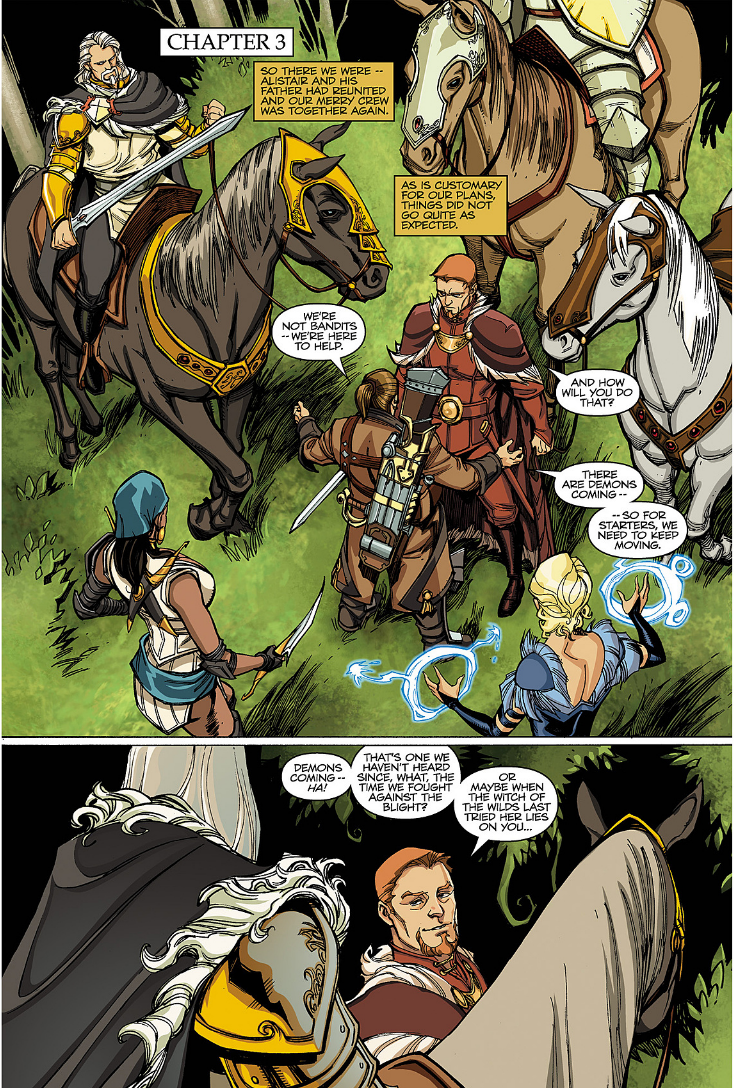
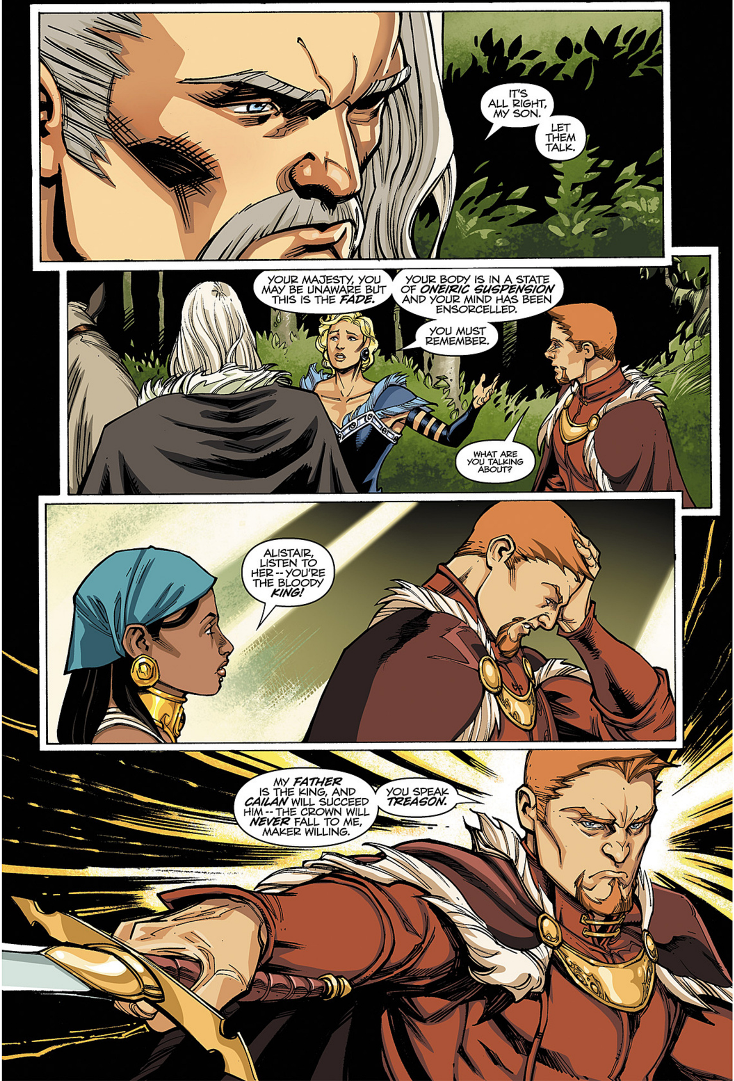
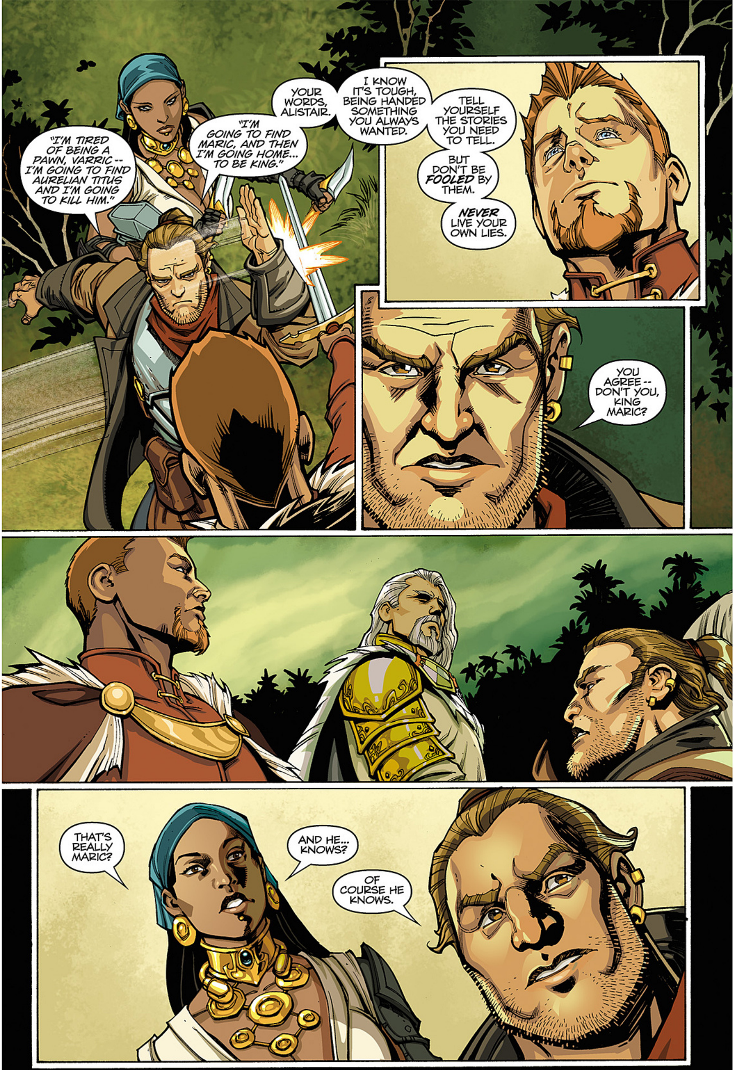
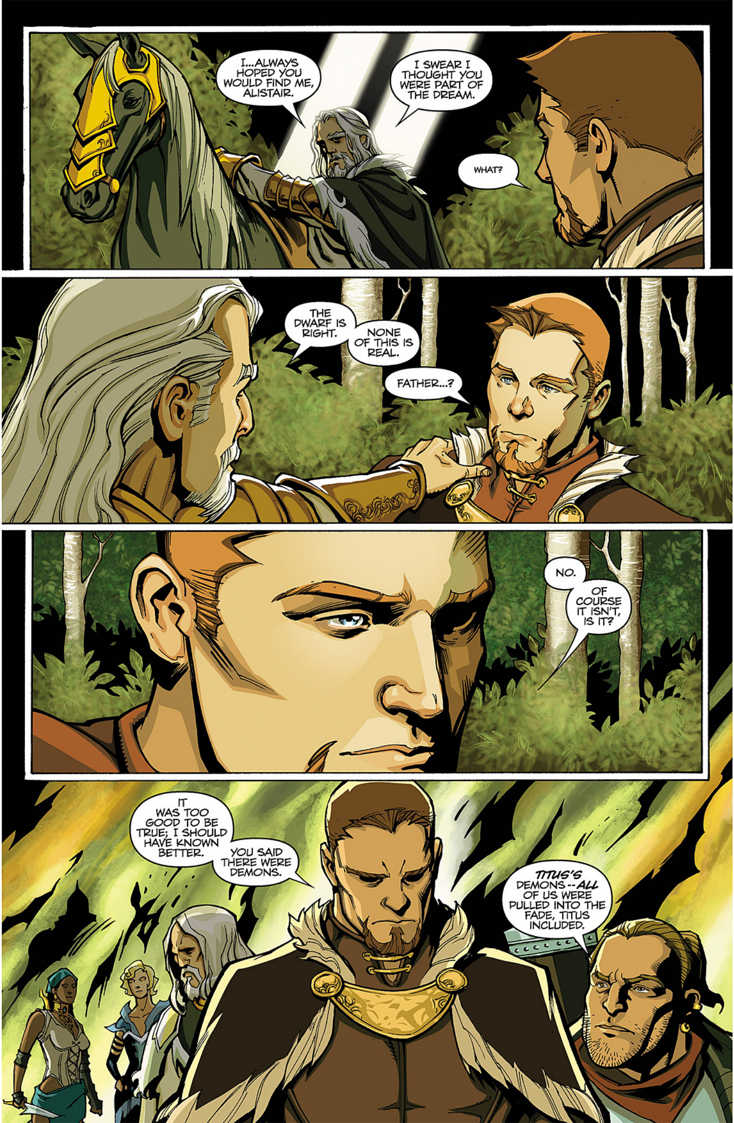
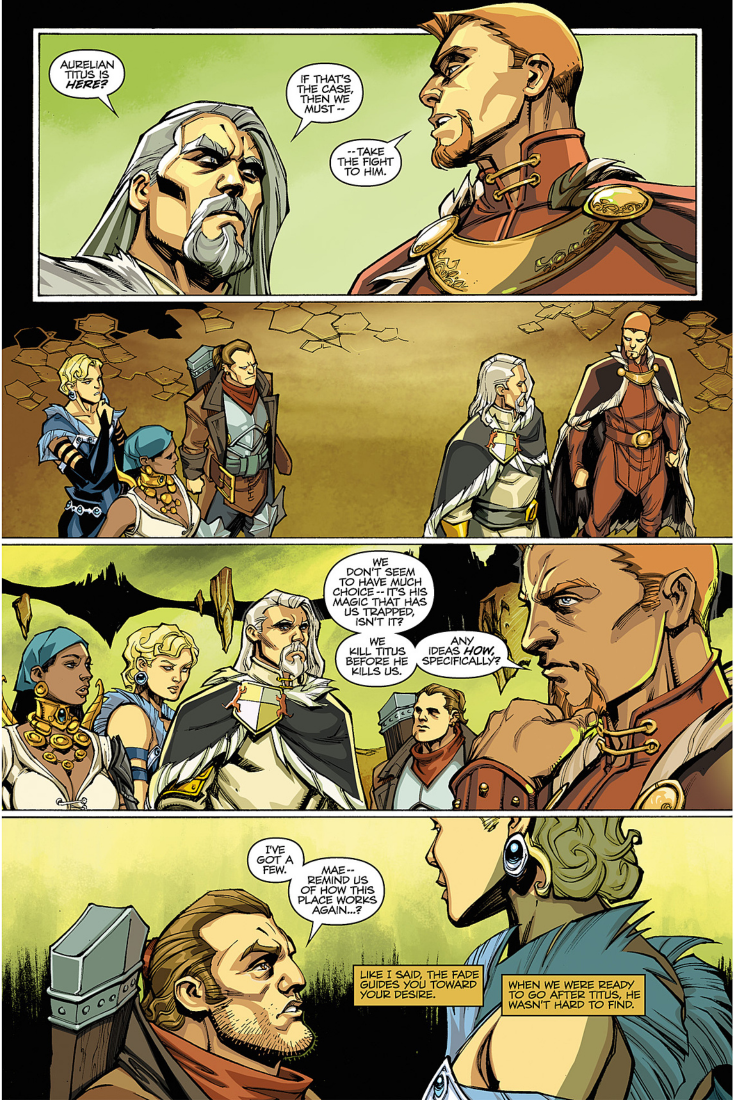
CHAPTER 3

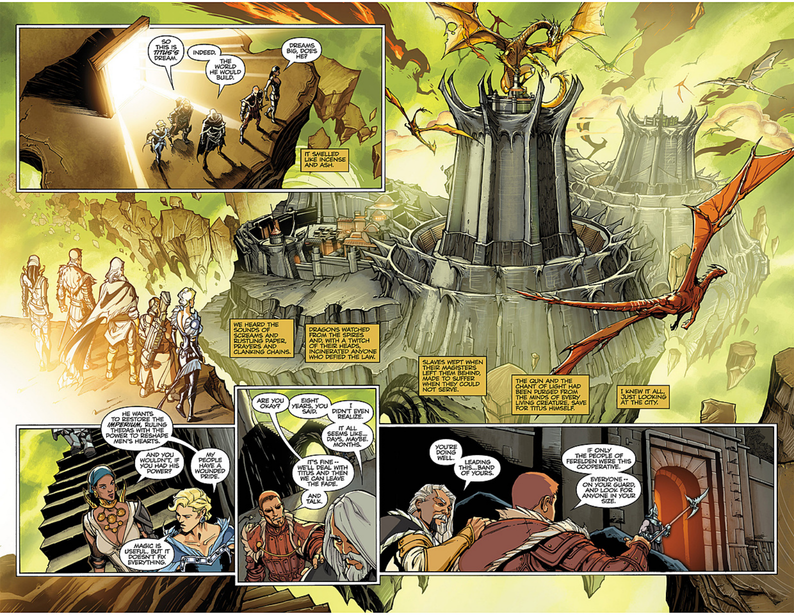

SO THERE WE WERE -- ALISTAIR AND HIS FATHER HAD REUNITED AND OUR MERRY CREW WAS TOGETHER AGAIN.
AS IS CUSTOMARY FOR OUR PLANS, THINGS DID NOT GO QUITE AS EXPECTED.
WE'RE NOT BANDITS -- WE'RE HERE TO HELP.
AND HOW WILL YOU DO THAT?
THERE ARE DEMONS COMING --
-- SO FOR STARTERS, WE NEED TO KEEP MOVING.
DEMONS COMING -- *HA!*
THAT'S ONE WE HAVEN'T HEARD SINCE, WHAT, THE TIME WE FOUGHT AGAINST THE BLIGHT?
OR MAYBE WHEN THE WITCH OF THE WILDS LAST TRIED HER LIES ON YOU...

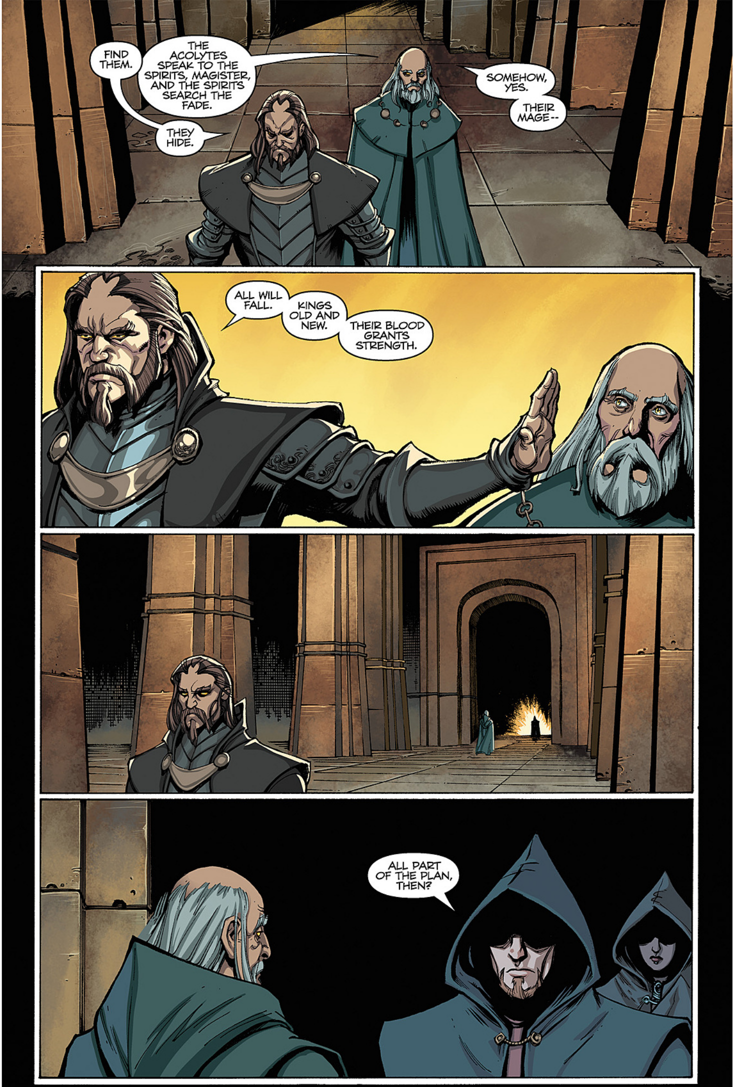

IT'S ALL RIGHT, MY SON.
LET THEM TALK.
YOUR MAJESTY, YOU MAY BE UNAWARE BUT THIS IS THE *FADE.*
YOUR BODY IS IN A STATE OF *ONEIRIC SUSPENSION* AND YOUR MIND HAS BEEN ENSORCELLED.
YOU MUST REMEMBER.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
ALISTAIR, LISTEN TO HER -- YOU'RE THE BLOODY *KING!*
MY *FATHER* IS THE KING, AND *CAILAN* WILL SUCCEED HIM -- THE CROWN WILL *NEVER* FALL TO ME, MAKER WILLING.
YOU SPEAK *TREASON.*

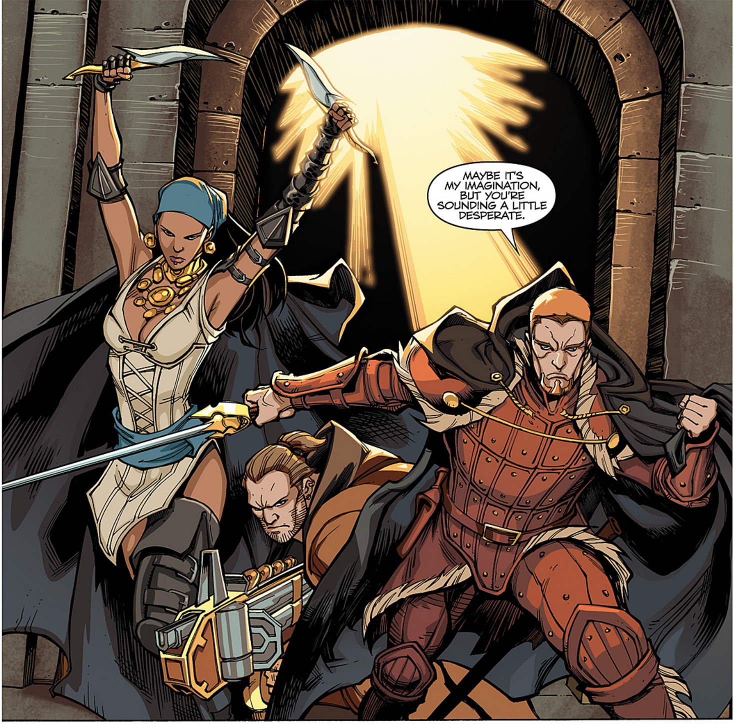

"I'M TIRED OF BEING A PAWN, VARRIC -- I'M GOING TO FIND AURELIAN TITUS AND I'M GOING TO KILL HIM."
"I'M GOING TO FIND MARIC, AND THEN I'M GOING HOME... TO BE KING."
YOUR WORDS, ALISTAIR.
I KNOW IT'S TOUGH, BEING HANDED SOMETHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED.
TELL YOURSELF THE STORIES YOU NEED TO TELL.
BUT DON'T BE *FOOLED* BY THEM.
NEVER LIVE YOUR OWN LIES.
YOU AGREE -- DON'T YOU, KING MARIC?
THAT'S REALLY MARIC?
AND HE... KNOWS?
OF COURSE HE KNOWS.

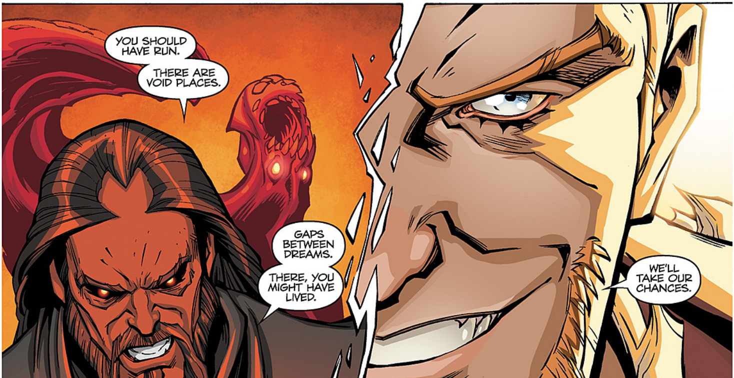

I...ALWAYS HOPED YOU WOULD FIND ME, ALISTAIR.
I SWEAR I THOUGHT YOU WERE PART OF THE DREAM.
WHAT?
THE DWARF IS RIGHT.
NONE OF THIS IS REAL.
FATHER...?
NO.
OF COURSE IT ISN'T, IS IT?
IT WAS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE; I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.
YOU SAID THERE WERE DEMONS.
TITUS'S DEMONS--*ALL* OF US WERE PULLED INTO THE FADE, TITUS INCLUDED.

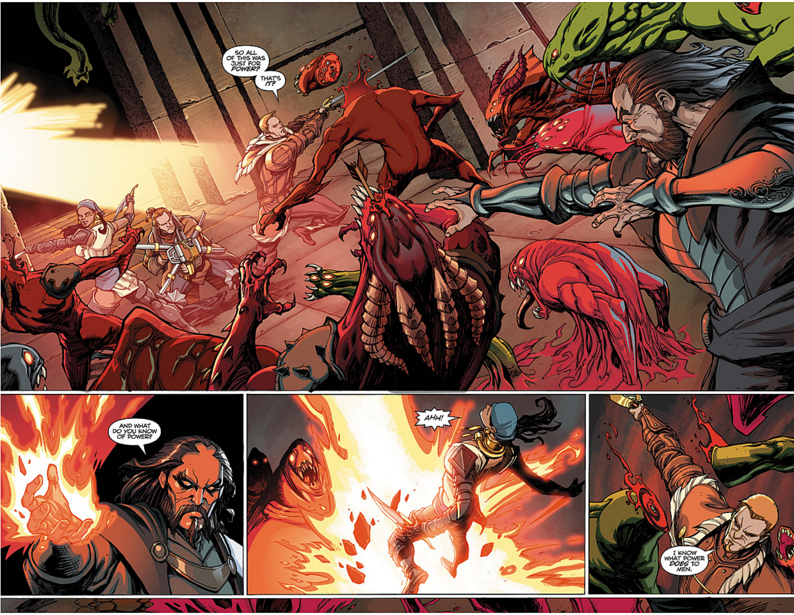

AURELIAN TITUS IS *HERE?*
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN WE MUST --
--TAKE THE FIGHT TO HIM.
WE DON'T SEEM TO HAVE MUCH CHOICE -- IT'S HIS MAGIC THAT HAS US TRAPPED, ISN'T IT?
WE KILL TITUS BEFORE HE KILLS US.
ANY IDEAS *HOW,* SPECIFICALLY?
I'VE GOT A FEW.
MAE-- REMIND US OF HOW THIS PLACE WORKS AGAIN...?
LIKE I SAID, THE FADE GUIDES YOU TOWARD YOUR DESIRE.
WHEN WE WERE READY TO GO AFTER TITUS, HE WASN'T HARD TO FIND.

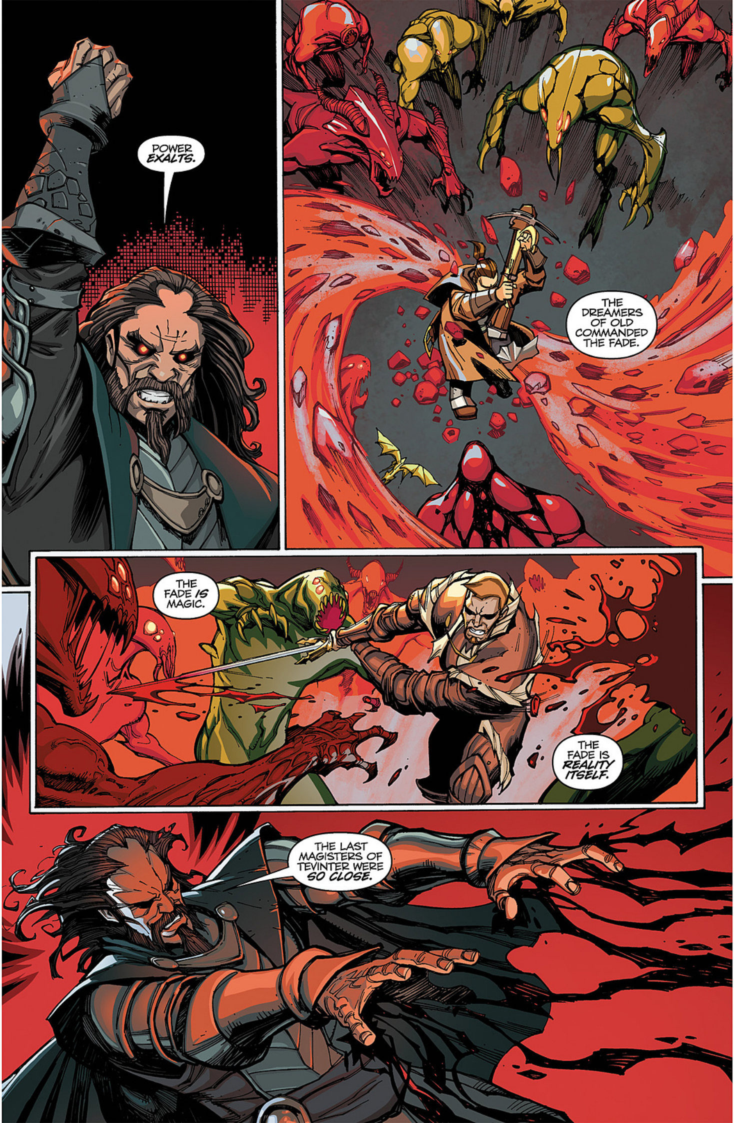

SO THIS IS TITUS'S DREAM.
INDEED.
THE WORLD HE WOULD BUILD.
DREAMS BIG, DOES HE?
IT SMELLED LIKE INCENSE AND ASH.
WE HEARD THE SOUNDS OF SCREAMS AND RUSTLING PAPER, PRAYERS AND CLANKING CHAINS.
DRAGONS WATCHED FROM THE SPIRES AND, WITH A TWITCH OF THEIR HEADS, INCINERATED ANYONE WHO DEFIED THE LAW.
SLAVES WEPT WHEN THEIR MAGISTERS LEFT THEM BEHIND, MADE TO SUFFER WHEN THEY COULD NOT SERVE.
THE QUN AND THE CHANT OF LIGHT HAD BEEN PURGED FROM THE MINDS OF EVERY LIVING CREATURE, SAVE FOR TITUS HIMSELF.
I KNEW IT ALL, JUST LOOKING AT THE CITY.
HE WANTS TO RESTORE THE *IMPERIUM*, RULING THEDAS WITH THE POWER TO RESHAPE MEN'S HEARTS.
AND YOU WOULDN'T, IF YOU HAD HIS POWER?
MY PEOPLE HAVE A WOUNDED PRIDE.
MAGIC IS USEFUL, BUT IT DOESN'T FIX EVERYTHING.
ARE YOU OKAY?
EIGHT YEARS, YOU SAID.
I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE.
IT ALL SEEMS LIKE... DAYS, MAYBE. MONTHS.
IT'S FINE -- WE'LL DEAL WITH TITUS AND THEN WE CAN LEAVE THE FADE.
AND TALK.
YOU'RE DOING WELL.
LEADING THIS...BAND OF YOURS.
IF ONLY THE PEOPLE OF FERELDEN WERE THIS COOPERATIVE.
EVERYONE -- ON YOUR GUARD, AND LOOK FOR ANYONE IN YOUR SIZE.

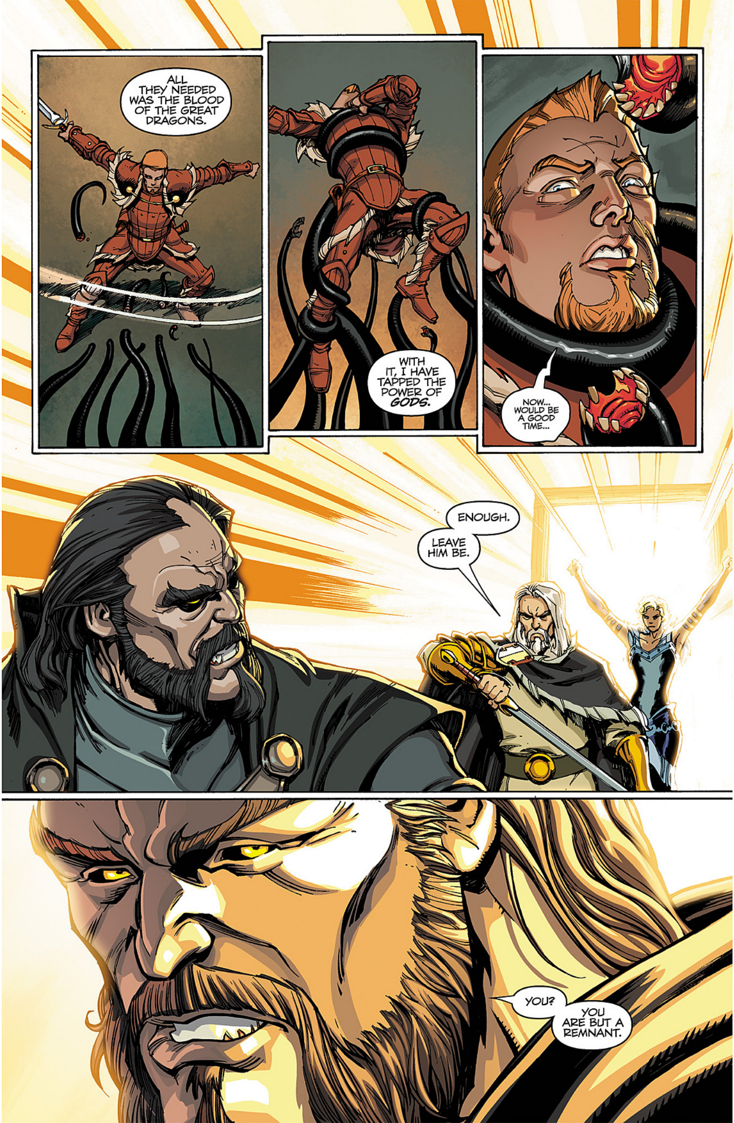

FIND THEM.
THE ACOLYTES SPEAK TO THE SPIRITS, MAGISTER, AND THE SPIRITS SEARCH THE FADE.
THEY HIDE.
SOMEHOW, YES.
THEIR MAGE--
ALL WILL FALL.
KINGS OLD AND NEW.
THEIR BLOOD GRANTS STRENGTH.
ALL PART OF THE PLAN, THEN?

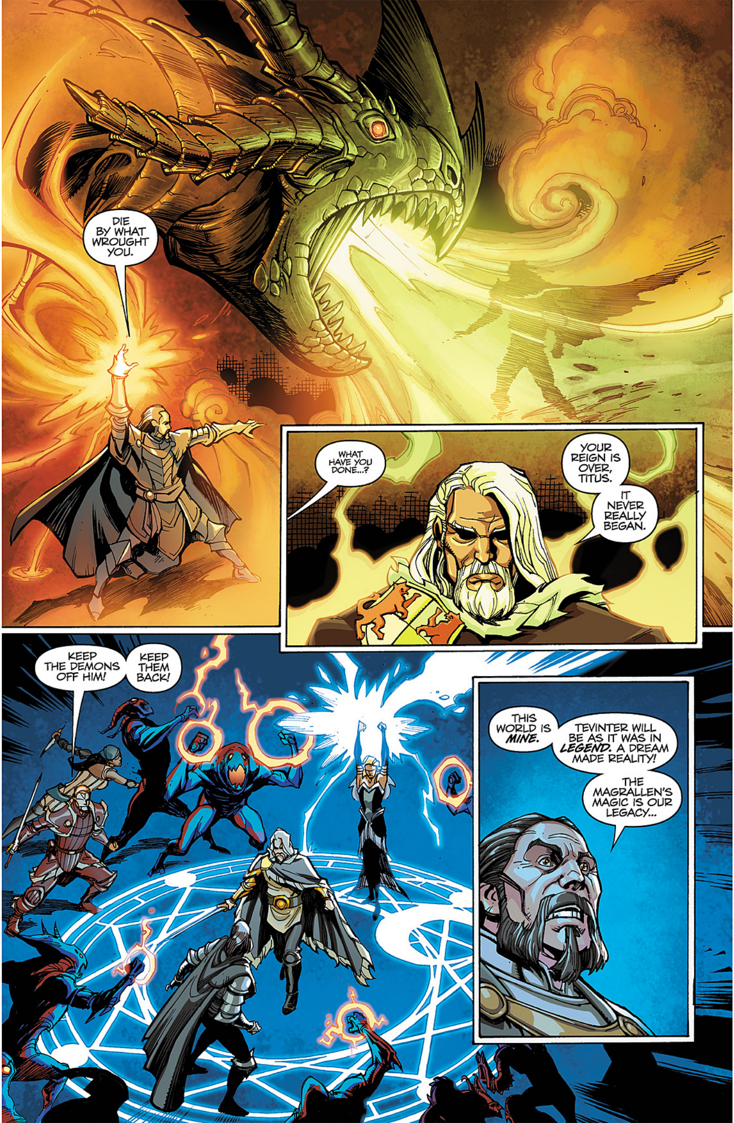

MAYBE IT'S MY IMAGINATION, BUT YOU'RE SOUNDING A LITTLE DESPERATE.

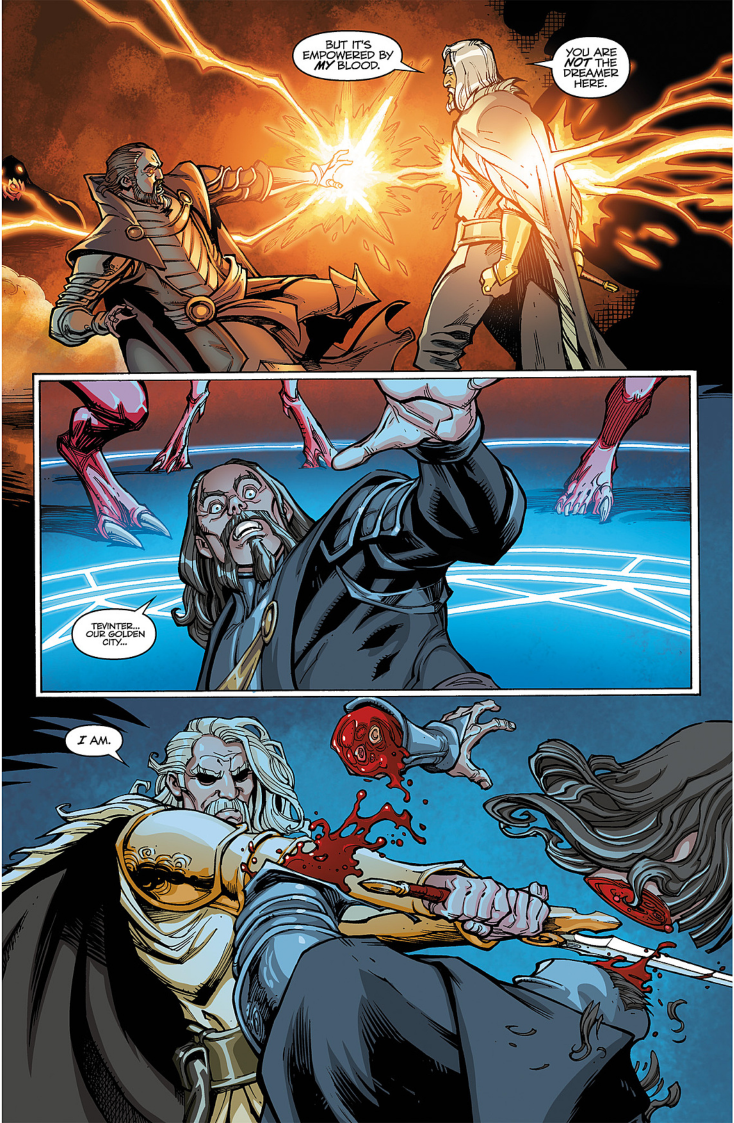

YOU SHOULD HAVE RUN.
THERE ARE VOID PLACES.
GAPS BETWEEN DREAMS.
THERE, YOU MIGHT HAVE LIVED.
WE'LL TAKE OUR CHANCES.

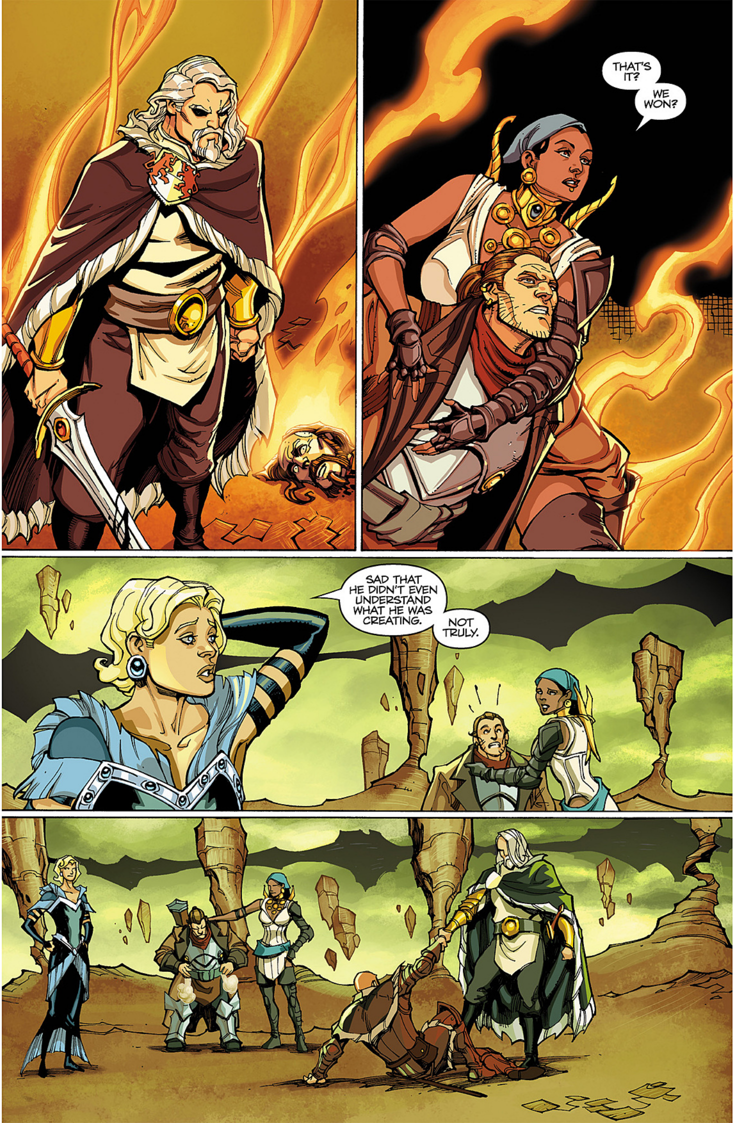

SO ALL OF THIS WAS JUST FOR *POWER?*
THAT'S *IT?*
AND WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF POWER?
AHH!
I KNOW WHAT POWER *DOES* TO MEN.

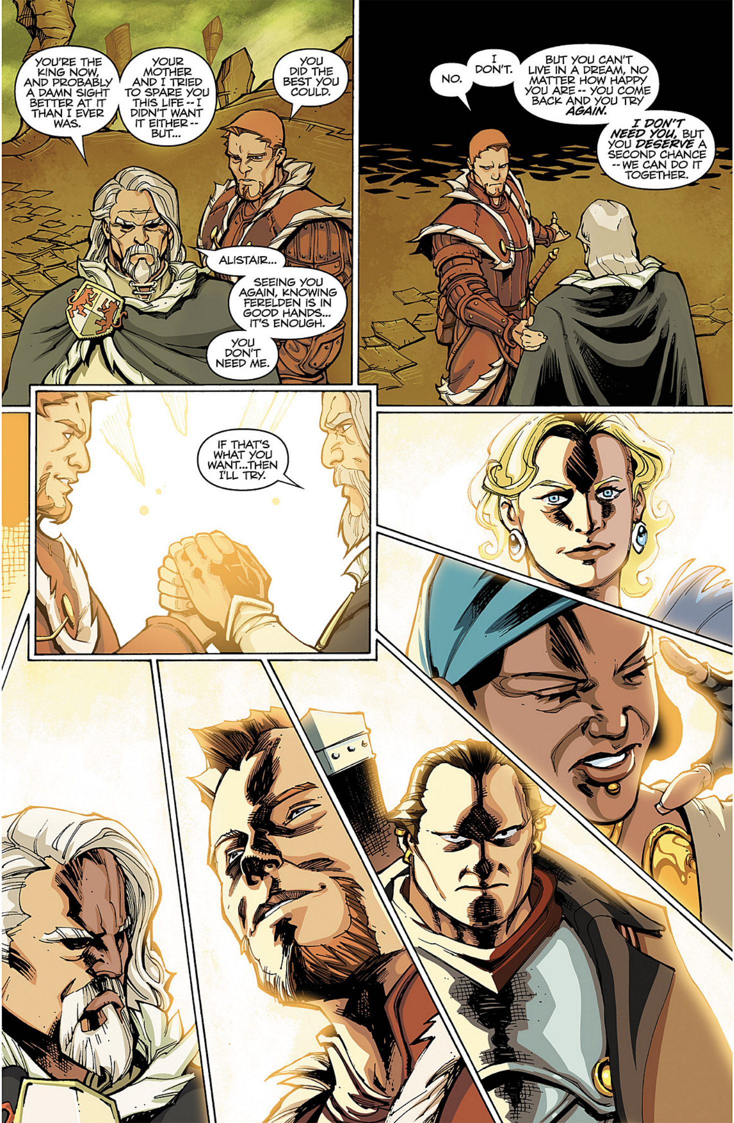

POWER *EXALTS.*
THE DREAMERS OF OLD COMMANDED THE FADE.
THE FADE *IS* MAGIC.
THE FADE IS *REALITY ITSELF.*
THE LAST MAGISTERS OF TEVINTER WERE *SO CLOSE.*

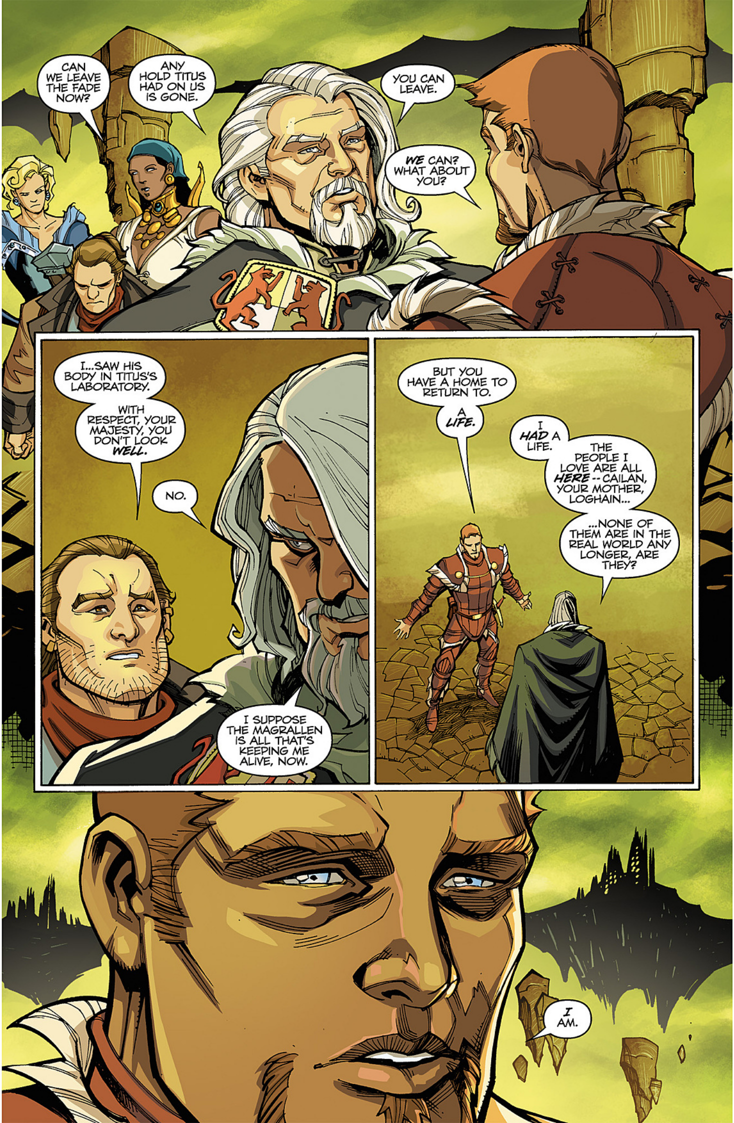

ALL THEY NEEDED WAS THE BLOOD OF THE GREAT DRAGONS.
WITH IT, I HAVE TAPPED THE POWER OF *GODS*.
NOW... WOULD BE A GOOD TIME...
ENOUGH.
LEAVE HIM BE.
YOU?
YOU ARE BUT A REMNANT.

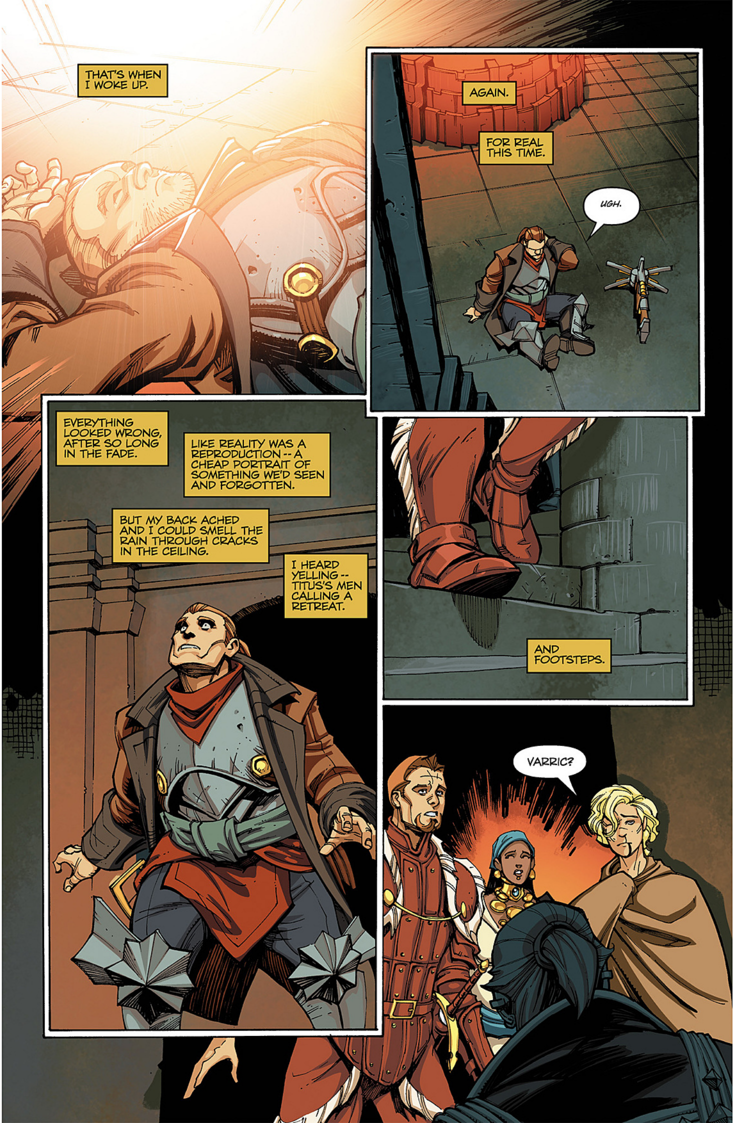

DIE BY WHAT WROUGHT YOU.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE...?
YOUR REIGN IS OVER, TITUS.
IT NEVER REALLY BEGAN.
KEEP THE DEMONS OFF HIM!
KEEP THEM BACK!
THIS WORLD IS ***MINE.***
TEVINTER WILL BE AS IT WAS IN ***LEGEND.*** A DREAM MADE REALITY!
THE MAGRALLEN'S MAGIC IS OUR LEGACY...

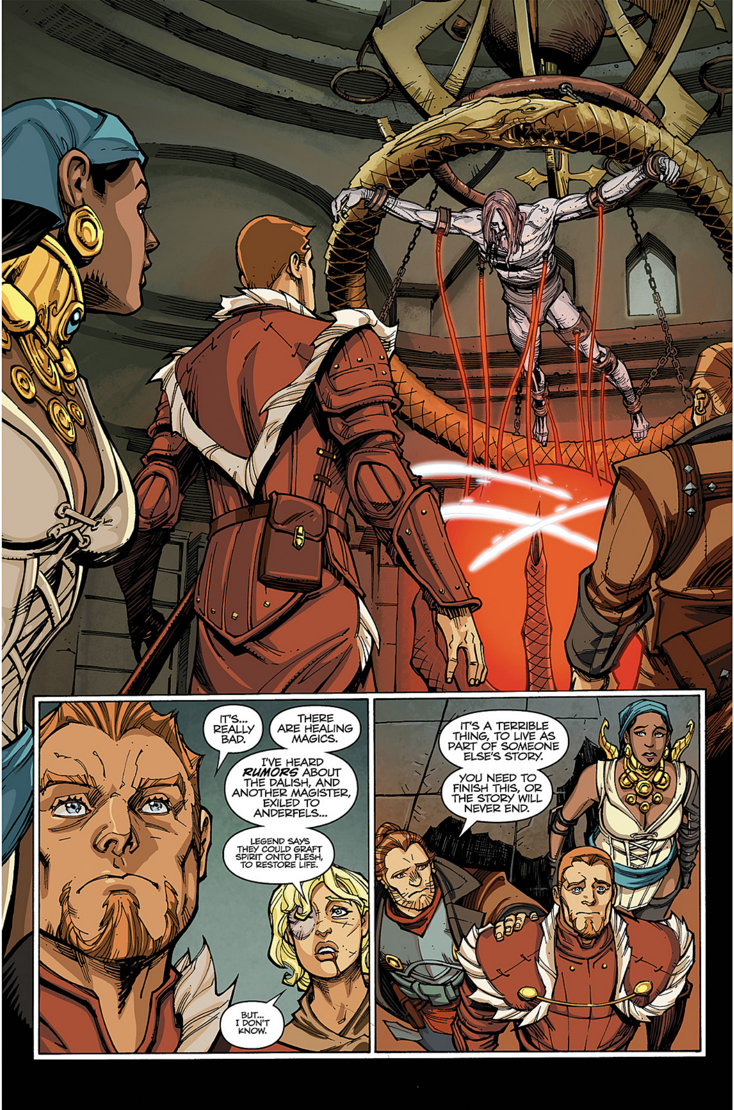

BUT IT'S EMPOWERED BY *MY* BLOOD.
YOU ARE *NOT* THE DREAMER HERE.
TEVINTER... OUR GOLDEN CITY...
I AM.

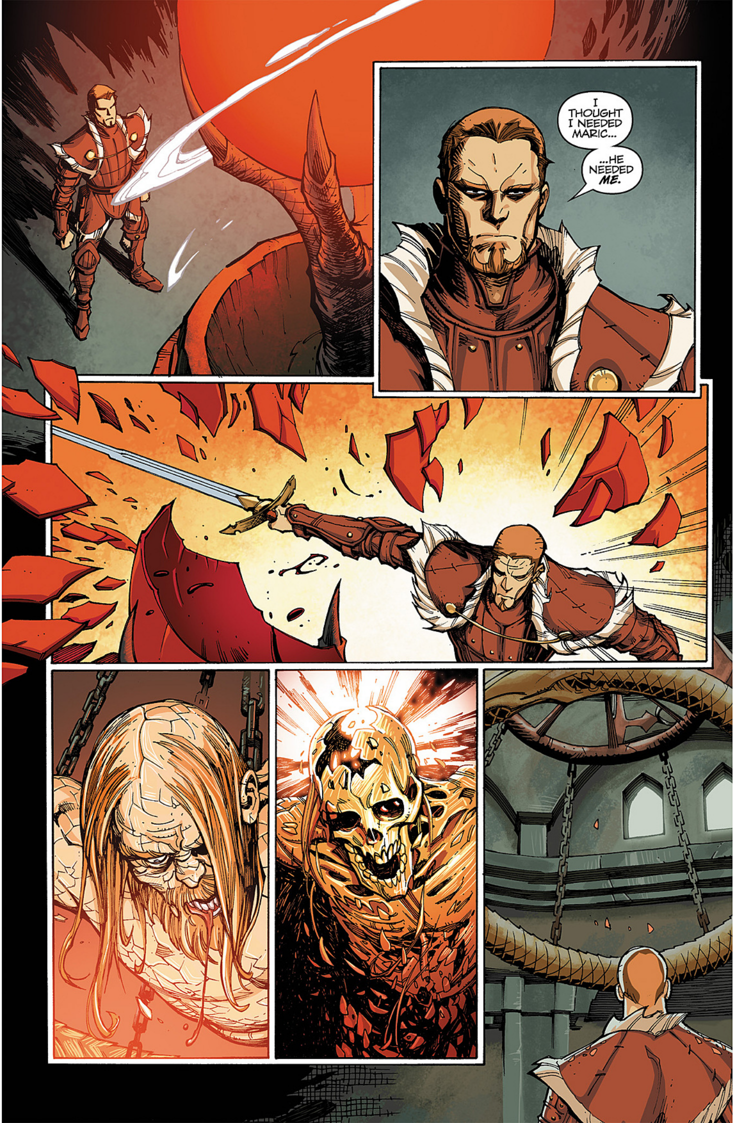

THAT'S IT?
WE WON?
SAD THAT HE DIDN'T EVEN UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WAS CREATING.
NOT TRULY.

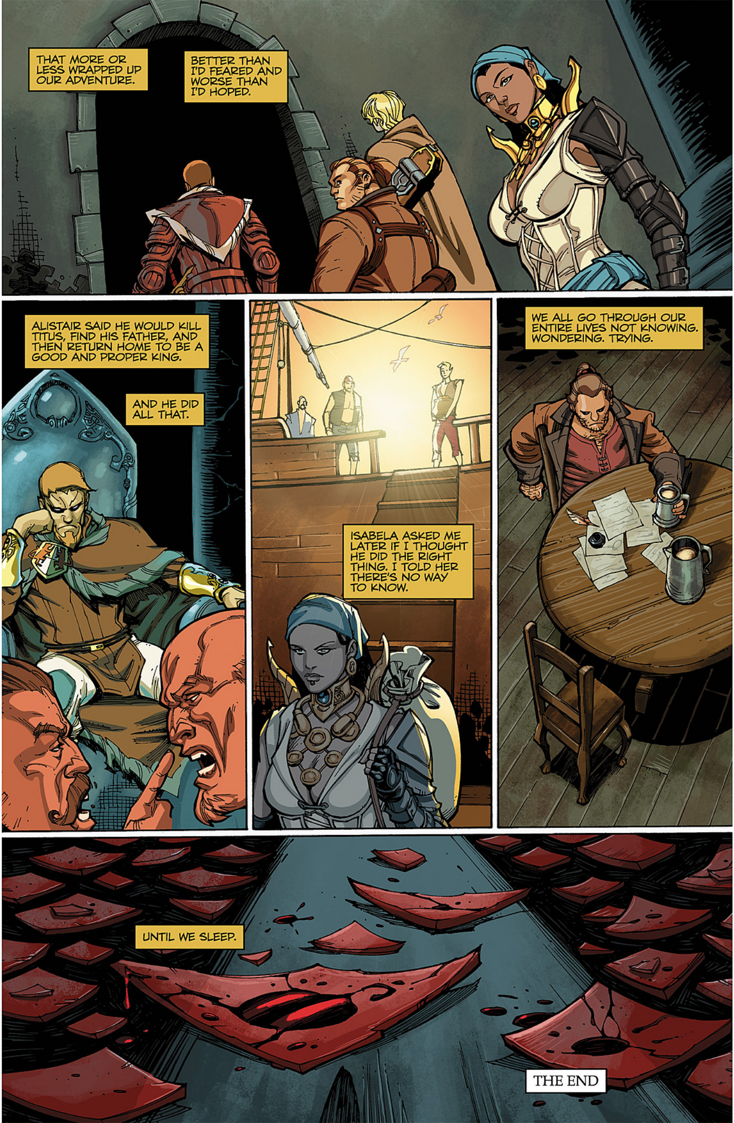

YOU'RE THE KING NOW, AND PROBABLY A DAMN SIGHT BETTER AT IT THAN I EVER WAS.
YOUR MOTHER AND I TRIED TO SPARE YOU THIS LIFE -- I DIDN'T WANT IT EITHER -- BUT...
YOU DID THE BEST YOU COULD.
ALISTAIR...
SEEING YOU AGAIN, KNOWING FERELDEN IS IN GOOD HANDS... IT'S ENOUGH.
YOU DON'T NEED ME.
NO.
I DON'T.
BUT YOU CAN'T LIVE IN A DREAM, NO MATTER HOW HAPPY YOU ARE -- YOU COME BACK AND YOU TRY ***AGAIN.***
I DON'T NEED YOU, BUT YOU ***DESERVE*** A SECOND CHANCE -- WE CAN DO IT TOGETHER.
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT...THEN I'LL TRY.


CAN WE LEAVE THE FADE NOW?
ANY HOLD TITUS HAD ON US IS GONE.
YOU CAN LEAVE.
WE CAN? WHAT ABOUT YOU?
I...SAW HIS BODY IN TITUS'S LABORATORY.
WITH RESPECT, YOUR MAJESTY, YOU DON'T LOOK *WELL*.
NO.
I SUPPOSE THE MAGRALLEN IS ALL THAT'S KEEPING ME ALIVE, NOW.
BUT YOU HAVE A HOME TO RETURN TO.
A *LIFE*.
I *HAD* A LIFE.
THE PEOPLE I LOVE ARE ALL *HERE* -- CAILAN, YOUR MOTHER, LOGHAIN...
...NONE OF THEM ARE IN THE REAL WORLD ANY LONGER, ARE THEY?
I AM.


THAT'S WHEN I WOKE UP.
AGAIN.
FOR REAL THIS TIME.
UGH.
EVERYTHING LOOKED WRONG, AFTER SO LONG IN THE FADE.
LIKE REALITY WAS A REPRODUCTION -- A CHEAP PORTRAIT OF SOMETHING WE'D SEEN AND FORGOTTEN.
BUT MY BACK ACHED AND I COULD SMELL THE RAIN THROUGH CRACKS IN THE CEILING.
I HEARD YELLING -- TITUS'S MEN CALLING A RETREAT.
AND FOOTSTEPS.
VARRIC?


IT'S... REALLY BAD.
THERE ARE HEALING MAGICS.
I'VE HEARD **RUMORS** ABOUT THE DALISH, AND ANOTHER MAGISTER, EXILED TO ANDERFELS...
LEGEND SAYS THEY COULD GRAFT SPIRIT ONTO FLESH, TO RESTORE LIFE.
BUT... I DON'T KNOW.
IT'S A TERRIBLE THING, TO LIVE AS PART OF SOMEONE ELSE'S STORY.
YOU NEED TO FINISH THIS, OR THE STORY WILL NEVER END.


I THOUGHT I NEEDED MARIC...
...HE NEEDED *ME.*


THAT MORE OR LESS WRAPPED UP OUR ADVENTURE.
BETTER THAN I'D FEARED AND WORSE THAN I'D HOPED.
ALISTAIR SAID HE WOULD KILL TITUS, FIND HIS FATHER, AND THEN RETURN HOME TO BE A GOOD AND PROPER KING.
AND HE DID ALL THAT.
ISABELA ASKED ME LATER IF I THOUGHT HE DID THE RIGHT THING. I TOLD HER THERE'S NO WAY TO KNOW.
WE ALL GO THROUGH OUR ENTIRE LIVES NOT KNOWING. WONDERING. TRYING.
UNTIL WE SLEEP.
THE END